



NOV 10 2014

Dear Sir or Madam:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 10, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Washington State University Extension, and the Washington State Department of Health share the common goals of keeping our children healthy and providing them with a safe learning environment. We want to highlight the importance of safe and effective pest control programs in our schools, announce upcoming training and networking events, and provide you with information to assist your school district.

Children face many risks from pests and pesticide exposures. Pests can bite, spread disease, cause allergic reactions, and trigger asthma attacks. Also, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics, "Epidemiologic evidence demonstrates associations between early life exposure to pesticides and pediatric cancers, decreased cognitive function, and behavioral problems."¹ Furthermore, pest and pesticide problems can be quite costly and cause legal liability for districts.

We collectively recommend schools use Integrated Pest Management (IPM) as a means to reduce the risk of pests and pesticide exposure to children. IPM is a smart, sensible, and sustainable approach to managing pests that focuses on addressing the underlying causes that enable pests to thrive. Practicing IPM has many benefits beyond pest management, including water and energy savings. Although Washington state schools are not required to implement an IPM program, we strongly recommend it as a best practice.

To promote safe pest management practices in Washington, EPA, WSU Extension, and Washington State Department of Agriculture are teaming up to provide **free** training and networking events for administrators, facility directors, custodial and maintenance staff, and contracted pest management professionals. For detailed information about these and other events, visit schoolipm.wsu.edu or sign up for the WSU urban IPM email distribution list by emailing urban.ipm@wsu.edu.

In addition to training, WSU Extension's Carrie Foss (urban.ipm@wsu.edu) will provide technical assistance to schools with pest or pesticide issues. Your school could also be recognized for making progress towards adopting safer pest management practices. Contact EPA's Juliann Barta (barta.juliann@epa.gov) for information about recognition.

Learn more about school IPM and find free online resources by visiting:

- Washington School IPM: schoolipm.wsu.edu
- Washington School IPM policy examples: schoolipm.wsu.edu/policies.html

¹ American Academy of Pediatrics Council of Environmental Health. (2012). Policy Statement: Pesticide Exposure in Children. *Pediatrics*, 130(6), e1757-e1763. doi: 10.1542/peds.2012-2757



- EPA PestWise: www.epa.gov/pestwise/ipminschoools
- EPA School IPM Webinars: www.epa.gov/pestwise/events/sipm-webinars.html

We are here to help as you develop or improve your school's IPM program.

Sincerely,

Dennis J. McLerran
Regional Administrator
U.S. EPA, Region 10

Richard T. Koenig
Director of Extension

Randy I. Dorn
State Superintendent
of Public Instruction

John Wiesman, DrPH, MPH
Secretary of Health

Attachment: www.epa.gov/pestwise/publications/ipm/School-IPM-Business-Case.pdf